

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ROME 10115 141645Z

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ACTION EB-07

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2062

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E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: EAIR, IT

SUBJ: CIVAIR - ITALIAN PRESS COVERAGE OF US-ITALY AIR TRANSPORT
AGREEMENT

REF: ROME 9768

1. ITALIAN NATIONAL WIRE SERVICE ANSA RAN FOLLOWING ITEM
JULY 10, WHICH ITEM THEN APPEARED IN JULY 11 ITALIAN PRESS:
ATE. A POTENTIAL PASSENGER MARKET OF ABOUT DLR 200 MILLION
ANNUALLY, US-ITALIAN AIR ROUTES, AND THE US-ITALY AIR TRANSPORT
AGREEMENT OPENED FOR DISCUSSION BY ALITALIA. ALREADY UNDERWAY
IS A TECHNICAL STUDY BY CIVILAVIA FOR THE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT,
WITHOUT WHICH ITALIAN DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIVES CANNOT INITIATE
REVISION OF THE AGREEMENT. ALITALIA, DIRECTLY INTERESTED IN
THIS AGREEMENT, LAST MAY PUT THE PROBLEM OF REVISION TO THE
MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, SO
THAT THE EFFECTIVE WEIGHT OF AIR TRAFFIC RIGHTS AND CAPACITY
COULD BE REDUCED ON A BALANCED BASIS. THE AGREEMENT, STILL
IN EFFECT, BETWEEN TWA, PAA AND ALITALIA SHOWS A NET DISFAVOR
TO THE ITALIAN FLAG CARRIER: THE US CARRIERS HAVE 72 WEEKLY
FREQUENCIES BETWEEN ITALY AND THE UNITED STATES AND ALITALIA
HAS 24. THIS DEVELOPED ON THE BASIS OF OPTIMISTIC AIR TRAFFIC
PROSPECTS, NO LONGER OF CONSEQUENCE BECAUSE OF THE ENERGY
CRISIS AND THE WESTERN ECONOMIC RECESSION. THE ANNUAL RATE
OF INCREASE IN PASSENGER TRAFFIC IN FACT DROPPED FROM 15 PERCENT
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PAGE 02 ROME 10115 141645Z

ANNUALLY IN THE 60'S, WITH A DOUBLING OF TRAFFIC EVERY 6 YEARS,

TO A LITTLE LESS THAN 3 PERCENT IN 1974 AND WITH A NOTABLE
DECREASE ON NORTH ATLANTIC ROUTES. RECENTLY THE AMERICAN AUTHO-
RITIES, PREOCCUPIED WITH THE BAD STATE OF BUSINESS FOR TWA AND
PAA, PROCEEDED TO A REORGANIZATION OF US AIR SERVICES, WITH
ALL EUROPE -- EXCEPT ITALY-- EXPERIENCING A RATIONALIZATION
OF FLIGHTS AND SERVICES OFFERED. THE US IS ESPECIALLY INTERESTED
IN ITALY AS AN INTERMEDIATE POINT FOR EASTERN COUNTRIES. UNQTE.

2. COMMENT: ABOVE NEWS ITEM, WHICH CONTAINS SEVERAL MISLEADING
STATEMENTS, IS ALITALIA/GOI'S FIRST PUBLIC UTTERANCE IN CAMPAIGN
TO ATTAIN OBJECTIVES DESCRIBED REFTEL.VOLPE

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